



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P. O. BOX 4970
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32232-0019

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

Regulatory Division

JUL 18 2005

PUBLIC NOTICE

UNIFORM MITIGATION ASSESSMENT METHOD

PROPOSAL: To simplify and speed evaluation of Department of the Army permits, the Jacksonville District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) will implement the Uniform Mitigation Assessment Method (UMAM) in the state of Florida on August 1, 2005. UMAM provides a standardized procedure for assessing the functions provided by wetlands and other waters of the United States, the amount those functions are reduced by a proposed impact, and the amount of mitigation necessary to offset that loss.

BACKGROUND: On February 2, 2004, UMAM went into effect at the state level, and those Florida state and local governments responsible for environmental regulation were required to begin using the methodology. Developed by the state with the input of local and Federal agencies, implementation of the rule superseded the state's previous ratio guidelines.

Consistent with the Corps' Regulatory Guidance Letter 02-2 concerning compensatory mitigation for aquatic resource impacts, the objective is to provide a minimum one-to-one functional replacement for wetland loss. To do this it is recommended the functions of an assessment area be appropriately identified and evaluated through a functional assessment methodology. While the Corps' regulations neither prescribe nor proscribe any specific numeric functional assessment, the Corps desires to be responsive to the needs of the public by accepting the same methodology required at the state and local levels.

The Corps chose to delay implementation because UMAM had not been sufficiently applied in the field by Corps staff and information

was needed to help address Federal agency concerns with UMAM. It would not have been reasonable to expect uniform application of the methodology and thus, unfair to expect consistent results without this structured field application. Consequently, the Corps implemented a plan that tested the method and trained staff. The Corps is now prepared to accept functional analyses utilizing UMAM in lieu of its previously preferred functional methodology, the Wetland Rapid Assessment Procedure or WRAP.

For one year subsequent to the Corps' implementation of UMAM, the Corps will collect data from projects that utilized UMAM for its assessment. The data collection will be an extension of the data collected during the above-mentioned testing period to ensure the Corps is applying the method as consistently as possible. This data collection effort will be transparent to the applicant.

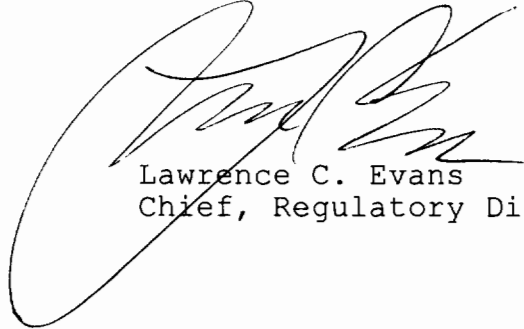
To facilitate consistent implementation of UMAM, the Corps will conduct follow-up training around the state for Corps staff, state and Federal agency staff, mitigation bankers, consultants, and any other interested parties in the regulated community. The follow-up training will be conducted in seven areas of the state in accordance with the following schedule:

Cocoa - July 25, 2005
Miami - August 4, 2005
Jacksonville - August 9, 2005
Panama City - August 11, 2005
Palm Beach Gardens - August 18, 2005
Ft. Myers - August 23, 2005
Tampa - August 24, 2005

Each Corps regional office has been requested to finalize Department of the Army permit decisions using UMAM as a basis for assessing mitigation requirements only after the office has received the follow-up training in accordance with the above schedule. However, beginning on August 1, 2005, the Corps will begin accepting data supporting UMAM scores and using such data during our permit evaluation process.

QUESTIONS: If you have any questions concerning the follow-up training schedule or implementation of UMAM, please contact

Kelly Unger of this office at 904-232-1676 or by electronic mail at kelly.e.unger@saj02.usace.army.mil.



Lawrence C. Evans
Chief, Regulatory Division